



KURO OBI SHINZA

(Black-Belt Grading)

11 January 2026 – Raroa Intermediate
11am – 3.00pm

Programme

SHINZA PROGRAMME

Shodan Candidates:

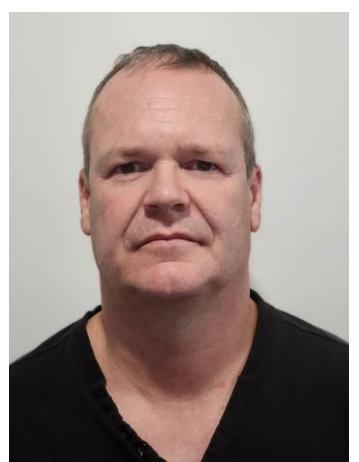
Tessa Mawby



Alyssa Narayanan



Matt (Nitro) Lucas



Pre-grading day requirements

Class Instruction

The candidates have already demonstrated their ability to competently:

- Start and finish sessions (including reciting Dojo Kun).
- Take class warm-up
- Demonstrate, and count basic (Kihon) techniques in prescribed order.
- Describe, perform and correct medium level (up to 3 technique combination) Ido Geiko.
- Take class through Taikyoku and Pinan kata – making corrections to students' stance and technique as appropriate.

Grading Day Requirements

Strength/Stamina

Exercises in accordance with IKO Matsushima senior dan-grade requirements

Ido Geiko (Moving basics)

10 combinations –using variable basic strikes, kicks, blocks in formal stances - to be advised during grading

Renraku (Combinations)

10 combinations of own making (from fighting position)

Ippon (one-step) Kumite

Own choice of blocks and retaliations against:

5 Chudan Tsuki

5 Judan Tsuki

5 Mae Geri

Sanbon (three-step) Kumite

10 combinations to be advised during grading

Kata (Patterns)

Taikyoku Sokogi Ichi - Yon	Gekisai Dai
Taikyoku Ich- San (incl. Tate and Ura)	Gekisai Sho
Juji Kata	Saiha
Pinan Ichi-Ni (Ura & Tate)	Seienshin
Pinan San-Go	Chion
Yantsu	Pinan Ni (Blind-folded)
Tsuki No	Sanshin-Tensho
Own Kata	

10 Minute Break

Tameshiwari (Board Breaking) –

Candidates to decide any three of the following:

- 1 Seiken Waza (Punch)
- 1 Shuto Waza (Knife hand)
- 1 Hiji Waza (Elbow)
- 1 Geri Waza (Kick)

Self Defence

Defences against multiple attacks (including at least 1 weapon) – to be demonstrated as a continuous scenario.

10 Minute Break

Jiyu Kumite (Free fighting)

40 bouts

Spirit Test

As advised by Shihan at grading

Grading Ends

My Kyokushin Karate Journey – Tessa Mawby (January 2026)

When I was 9 and a half years old I was a particularly short, weak looking blonde kid. And I walked to school by myself after I parted ways with my brother, who was forced to walk me down to the corner of our street everyday. My parents wanted me to be as safe as possible, and being a young and small kid walking to school an hour before it started made me an easy target for anyone. So using my fathers previous knowledge of Sensei Jim Jennings and Shihan Peter Jennings they decided to enroll me in karate.

I had grown up watching a show called “kickin it” which dictated my whole view of karate and was full of throws. So when I was told I would be trying karate I was hesitant. When I got to the dojo I was nervous and didn't leave my mom's side till it started. I remember doing the formal warmup and the basic techniques where I was told I could yell as loud as I wanted no one would get mad, so I did. I remember doing kumite and being told I could fight hard and hit hard, so I did.

I met many people who changed my life that first day. I was in total awe of the female members who were so strong and kind, especially our own Sempai Chrissy. My view of karate changed forever. At the end of the hour I climbed into my mum's car and she asked me how it went. I responded “Mom, dancing would have been cool, but THANK YOU for finding karate”. My mum has held onto those words for almost 10 years now. Never letting me forget how I felt about karate from the start.

I found it easy to move up because of my keen attitude and loud kiai. I always wanted to be better - do more. I always had the motivation to keep going. It came in good forms and bad. But anytime something wasn't ok I could come to karate and clear my mind for just an hour.

My dad always told me “focus grass hopper” so I did. And at the start of every session we would close our eyes and take a second to meditate and “forget about what had happened at school or at home” as my shihan and sensei would say. I took that to heart more than I felt the other kids around me did. I liked the kumite the best. The combinations, looking for angles, fast reactions and powerful techniques scratched an itch in my brain which later turned out to be ADHD.

Sometimes control and peace wasn't easy, and so being calm and controlled became my main roadblock. Every time I finished a grading someone would tell me I needed more control and to not get angry. I couldn't see how I could ever stop myself from getting angry. It just bubbled up every time someone hit me too hard or I forgot to block a punch or a kick. It was never about the person hurting me, it was about how I thought I should have seen it coming and how I didn't block the technique.

It was self-critique which let me down most days. I was told to channel my anger, from my head to my hands, to my toes. Every time I stepped into the dojo I thought about what I was going to do better that day. I did what I could to control and show I wouldn't get angry. But at the same time I was becoming a teenager and learning how cruel high school could be. Bad motivation.

Around yellow belt to green belt with a black stripe (a time when most would quit) that bullying gave me a reason to need karate. I needed to let the anger pass through me in a controlled environment. so through kiai, kata and kumite the grip of teenage life passed through.

I went through covid lockdown in my first few weeks, of the first term or the first year of high school. Sometime after the difficult classes of karate 2 meters apart everywhere, no kumite, online training with my Shihan and teaching my mum karate in our garage, I found a sense of control. It felt good knowing I looked and was in utter control of myself and how I could react. I found quickly that when you show that kind of maturity in karate people notice. So I was given more responsibility - got to help out. I became the person who would critique and not be critiqued during basics.

It got to a point in 2024 when I wanted to quit for the first time. The first time in almost 9 years. I didn't think I loved karate anymore. It soon became clear after being told to take a break by my loved ones, that losing karate felt as horrible as losing my mom could.

As more storm clouds came through my life there were times the people and the encouragement and the strength in both body and mind saved my life. I never realized the family I had around me every time I stepped into my dojo until I needed it most. Karate never left my mind. Karate really has made me into a person the little Tessa would be so proud of.

When I became a yellow belt with a black stripe I got hit with a wave of new things to know. Not just basics anymore. I needed to know the names of everything. Parts of the body, japanese and english names for techniques, stances and the appropriate weight on my front and back leg. It was a lot to take in. What I enjoyed learning most was the dojo kun. when you're a white belt all the way at the back you can hear it.

The first time I heard it recited, though it was all in Japanese, I really could hear it. When I got closer up to the front I listened. And every line became my biggest morals. "respect our superiors and refrain from violence". It stuck with me more than any other line. I came to terms with knowing I didn't have to like the people I trained with. I simply needed to be respectful and listen actively and take in everything I was being taught. No matter who it was from. Even outside the dojo I did my best to respect my teachers, as well as my parents. The dojo kun has become like a stamp printed to the front of my mind. It continues to remind me of the person I want to be to myself and others.

Karate has been my biggest supporter, my confidence, my discipline and frequently my biggest challenge. My biggest support through it all would be my Mum who was always reassuring me and being my biggest fan, as well as Sensei Dar. He pushed me to be better at every opportunity. I didn't always like him for how hard he pushed me. Looking back I am thankful for how he never gave up on me. Because he made me stronger. And continues to support me in my Kumite. Sensei Jim Jennings, whom I don't see often but when I do it is like stepping into a world of wisdom. Always calming my nerves. A huge sideline support for my mental journey.

To Sensei Bev Anne and Shihan Peter, My karate mom and dad. I frequently explain to my mum how I owe so much to them. For how much growth they gave me. And how much I don't think they ever knew they meant so much to me. Many other people have been a big part of my journey but those 4 made the biggest differences. I am forever grateful to those who continue to support me. As difficult as it may be sometimes.

One day I hope to make my dojo as proud of me as I feel about all of them. If that be by competing in a world tournament or becoming the Shihan I strive to be. A 9 year journey ends so another may begin.

Black belt essay - More Than a Martial Art:

How Karate Shaped My Strength

By Alyssa Narayanan

Strength can take many forms, though I didn't understand that when I first began karate at the age of five. Back then, I didn't have a clear reason for being there. To me, it was simply a fun hobby, something exciting to look forward to after school, a place where I could kick, punch, and learn cool moves. At that age, I didn't understand the deeper values behind the art. I didn't yet see the lessons in discipline, respect, and perseverance. All I knew was that I enjoyed it, and that was enough to keep me going.

As I grew older, karate slowly became more than just an activity. It shaped parts of me without me even realizing it. Every class I attended, every technique I struggled with, and every belt I earned helped me build confidence bit by bit. I still remember the first time I broke a board — my hands were shaking, and I was convinced I wouldn't be able to do it.

When the board finally cracked beneath my strike, I realised that improvement comes from consistency, patience, and a willingness to step out of my comfort zone. Karate showed me that confidence is not something you wake up with; it's something you build through effort and experience.

By the time I reached high school, karate had also begun to strengthen my leadership skills. Teaching younger students, supporting my classmates, and setting an example in the dojo pushed me to communicate better and act with more responsibility. I started to understand that being a leader isn't about being the loudest or the strongest; it's about helping others succeed, staying calm in difficult moments, and showing respect through your actions. Karate challenged me to become someone others could rely on, both inside and outside the dojo.

Then, in Year 9, karate took on a meaning I never expected. That was when I learned that my mum had been sexually abused as a child over a prolonged period of time. Hearing this changed my understanding of strength completely. It made me pause and look at karate, my mum, and myself in a different light. I realised that karate wasn't just a hobby, it was a connection to resilience, protection, and personal empowerment.

Knowing what my mum had gone through made me see the true importance of the martial arts values I had been learning my whole life: courage, respect, perseverance, and the ability to stand up for oneself and for others. It also helped me understand my mum's motives behind encouraging me to learn karate. She wanted to ensure I could protect myself, while also giving me the confidence and belief in my own worth that she wasn't given the chance to have at my age.

From that moment on, my training became more intentional. I pushed myself not just to perfect my technique, but to honour the strength my mum showed in surviving something unimaginable. Karate began to feel deeply personal — not just a physical practice, but a way to build emotional and mental resilience. It gave me a purpose: to grow into someone who is confident, respectful, and capable of facing difficult truths with courage.

Now, as I stand on the path toward earning my black belt, I can see how far karate has carried me. It has helped me grow from a shy five-year-old into someone who believes in their abilities. It has taught me leadership, discipline, and resilience. Most importantly, it has helped me understand the value of strength, not just physical strength, but the kind that comes from compassion, courage, and perseverance.

Earning a black belt is not the end of my journey. Instead, it is a reminder of everything I have learned so far and everything I aspire to become. Karate has shaped me into a stronger, more confident, and more grounded person, and I will carry these lessons with me into every part of my future.

Shodan Essay

Candidate Matt Lucas

I had come across Kyokushin a few times in my life from fellow workmates that had studied it and as rivals when I had done Tein Shan Pai under Kati Unia when I was entering the workforce

So when I bumped into Dan Penn and he invited me to watch a tournament at Tom Kupas dojo and introduced me to Shihan Richard Wooster who I believe we had crossed paths with over the years but never really connected, I was really happy when I was invited to come watch a session at the WIKKA dojo

Instantly hooked , this is what I had been missing since I had been married and had children , an outlet for a burn in my soul under a man that was not a traditionalist and would understand the way I am

I knew we were going to be great mates well before he did , I admired his knowledge base and stories and how he used Karate in every facet of teaching
I started with a hiss and a roar as so many white belts and 15 minutes into my first session I was in the toilets throwing up learning quickly to ease into it and stop trying to keep up with the seasoned practitioners

Introducing my children into it so they would not be victims in this world even though my son quit ...he still carries with him the lessons he learnt while my daughter, I sleep easier knowing she knows how to defend herself as any Father would understand

My first grading was possibly one of my toughest, I had not pushed myself that hard in 15 years and felt every bit of it, not to mention having Rhiannon and Sempai Meihana “condition” me was definitely something I have never forgotten

My first Kyokushin fight was an experience , driving to Wellington at 4am to compete in a not so great tournament and being matched with a much heavier and younger fighter the butterflies were almost out of control , but using what I had been taught I settled them down and won my fight convincingly

Letting discipline slip I lost my second fight by underestimating my opponents kicking technique and getting dropped to the ground , also my cardio has never been where it should be , being humbled at that 1st competition made me a better martial artist in my belief

The next tournament I entered had the odds very stacked against me fighting back to back in 3 kumites against heavier opponents and younger again , winning 2 but the 3rd I could not bring the dojo the grand champion trophy but I left everything on the mat and gained some respect

As I have trained I have grownboth mentally and spiritually but also in age , but I believe I will do this till I die as even when the body fails I can impart wisdom and pass on what I have learned from Shihan Richard as he has passed on from Shihan Solly Purcell

One of my favourite pictures is of myself Shihan Solly and Hanshi John Taylor this is also another humbling moment as I was unable to compete in the Kumite on the 2nd day of the tournament after breaking my scaphoid in “non-contact” which Hanshi stated I should probably not admit with a chuckle

My aspirations moving forward is to pay back to the Kyokushin community that which they have instilled in me mostly through Shihan Richard Wooster , Kyokushin has formed me into the man I am today and I thank both him and all others that have ever helped be it from fighting or pointers or words of advice

Osu